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RAILROADED

A One Act Play

CHARACTERS:

BLANCH EGAN: Local town gossip, cunning, stirrer, disliked, early fifties.

MINNIE WENT: Likeable, gullible, sweet but not too naive. Club foot with constant limp. Seventies.

CLARRIE BEECHAMP: Frustrated actor. Bright and happy. Early thirties.

HELEN JASPER: Stern and forceful. Mid fifties.

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SCENE 1

Scene opens with CLARRIE reading a letter he has just written, he is holding a biro, sitting cross legged on floor in his bedroom. Corner of bed is only visible prop on stage, which is almost in darkness. Voice Over.

CLARRIE'S

VOICE: Dear Aunt MIN, you will only be reading this letter in the event of something going wrong. You will have known of our plan, that is me and HELEN JASPER, to rid this town of that bitch, BLANCH EGAN. I could not tell you of this as I know you would not condone our actions. You brought me up to love people and when HELEN became my godmother she taught me to beware of people. Unfortunately I became beware (CROSSES OUT BEWARE) Unfortunately I became aware of BLANCH too late, as with most of the town but now I can free myself, not with an act of vengeance....(LOOKS UP).....yes with an act of vengeance.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

The scene opens in BLANCH'S living room. No Taste. Lounge, old stereo, table and chairs. Phone PS on wall. BLANCH playing patience. Knock at door. BLANCH turns sharply OP. Tip toes to door (just visible) and peeps into peephole. Door knock again. She tip toes over to phone and takes it off hook.

BLANCH: Yes, who is it?

MINNIE: It's me BLANCH.

BLANCH: Who is it please, I can't recognize the voice.

MINNIE: It's me, MINNIE, your friend MINNIE.

BLANCH: Hold on, I'm just on the phone. (BLANCH PICKS UP MAGAZINE, AND SLOWLY WALKS TO THE DOOR READING)
Is it you MINNIE?

MINNIE: Yes, it's me MINNIE.

BLANCH: (OPENS DOOR, VOICE IS ALMOST SICKENING) Oh!, hello MINNIE, how are you dear?, look I'm just on the phone, STD call.

MINNIE: Sorry BLANCH. I just wanted to know if you need anything at the shops.

BLANCH: (WALKS OVER TO PHONE) No thanks.

MINNIE: I made you one of my fruit cakes, I'll just put it on the table and be off.

BLANCH: (PICKS UP PHONE) Sorry.....it was a friend. Yes I am interested in helping disabled children. (GLANCES AT MINNIE WHO HAS WALKED OVER TO TABLE, TAKEN CAKE OUT OF TROLLEY AND PLACES ON TABLE)
I only ask that you keep my donation quiet as I prefer my giving to be personal....yes.....yes

MINNIE: (WHISPERS) Bye, bye.....see you later.

EXIT MINNIE

BLANCH: (ONCE DOOR HAS CLOSED BEHIND MINNIE, BLANCH REPLACES
RECEIVER, WALKS OVER TO TABLE, PICKS UP CAKE, SNIFFS
IT AND DROPS IT INTO BIN. SITS DOWN AND CONTINUES
CARD GAME.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

Afternoon same day. CARDABAR Railway Station platform. One long bench seat, noticeboard with timetable, toilet door, round bowl light. Clock. Station sign. CLARRIE enters PS wearing railway employees uniform.

CLARRIE: (SINGING) Casey Jones, steamin' and a rollin'
Casey Jones, you never have to guess,
Casey Jones, steamin' and a rollin'
It's Casey at the throttle of the cannonball express
Da da da dum, da da da dum, da da da dum, DA-DA-DA-DA
(LOOKS UP AND SEE'S MINNIE APPROACHING. MINNIE IS
STILL OFF STAGE. GETS ON ONE KNEE AND SINGS TO HER
TO THE TUNE OF "MAMMIE".

Minnie.....Minnie

The sun shines east, the sun shines west

I know where the sun shines best

Minnie.....Minnie

ENTER MINNIE

I'd walk a million miles for one of your smiles

My Minnie.....

MINNIE: (EMBARRASSED, LOOKING AROUND) Oh CLARRIE, someone could have seen you. (CLARRIE GIVES MINNIE A KISS, PULLS TROLLEY, BOTH SIT ON BENCH).

CLARRIE: I wish someone would Aunt Min, I might be famous, oh but to be discovered.

MINNIE: You are famous CLARRIE, not many boys your age have risen to the heights of assistant stationmaster.

CLARRIE: Yes I suppose you're right, I have fame and don't realize it. But then again seeing there are only two of us who work here one might look upon me as the lackey.

MINNIE: Not me. You're number one in my eyes.

CLARRIE: Thank's Aunt Min. It's nice to know I'm loved, but I can tell you of someone who doesn't share your feelings.

MINNIE: CLARRIE, if your refering to BLANCH EGAN I don't want to hear about it. (SIGH) I don't know why you have a dislike for her - she's good to me!

CLARRIE: You may not have noticed but since HELEN JASPER has been away that woman has been picking on me. She is such a bitch.

MINNIE: CLARRIE, a resentment against someone grows like a cancer. If you wouldn't entertain her in your home why entertain her in your head? (SHAKES HEAD, CAN'T BELIEVE SHE HAS JUST SAID IT)

CLARRIE: (SMILES HE CAN'T BELIEVE SHE JUST SAID IT) She's still a bitch. (TO THE TUNE OF WILLIAM TELL O/TURE) bitch da da bitch da da bitch bitch bitch da da bitch da da bitch da da bitch bitch bitch da da bitch da da bitch da da bitch bitch bitch da....da....bitch bitch bitch (CLARRIE BEAMING)

MINNIE: (CLAPPING, BEAMING) Ohhhh! you're such a talent.....but CLARRIE, she's not a b.

CLARRIE: I just can't understand you at times AUNT MIN, why are you friends with her?

MINNIE: Why am I friends with her?, because she's my friend, that's why. Everyone has a few bad points.

CLARRIE: Bad points, she has more bad points than the old school bus.

MINNIE: (CONFUSED SHAKES HEAD)
(SHARPLY) What are you doing tonight?

CLARRIE: Nothing much, why what's on.

MINNIE: I'm calling bingo at the church hall if you'd like to come down for a few games.

CLARRIE: Ahhh AUNT MIN, I forgot. I have some revision to do on the new timetable/you know it's pretty heavy stuff.

MINNIE: (LAUGHS) I love seeing you search for words (BOTH LAUGH AS MINNIE GETS UP) Don't forget to call in sometime CLARRIE, I'm still living at the same address. Bye love

CLARRIE: Bye AUNT MIN.

EXIT MINNIE, CLARRIE STAYS SEATED DEEP IN THOUGHT

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

The scene opens to the stage in darkness. BLANCH'S house.
Phone ringing. Early morning 1 am.

BLANCH: (SLEEPY AND ANGRY) That bloody phone. Hang on I'm coming (FALLS OVER BIN) ah shit!...bloody stupid thing, if that phone stops (PULLS LIGHT CORD WITH ONE HAND LIFTS RECEIVER WITH OTHER, TOPPLED BIN WITH CAKE SPEWED OVER FLOOR IS OBVIOUS)
(SUSPICIOUSLY) Hello, BLANCH EGAN speaking. (ANNOYED) Who is this?.....what do you mean, never mind. It happens to be,(LOOKS AT WATCH) one o'clock in the morning....I'm not in the mood for fun and games..so I will bid you a goodwhat was that....HELEN JASPER.....yes I know her, she's a good friend.....no wait, what what what?...you don't like her.....well you're about the only person I know who shares my feelings - I hate her guts. That's putting it mildly - who are you?.....I see, but why do, you want revenge?.....She what, she had your practice investigated - the bitch!

Your're a doctor then.....and she had your name struck
off the roll, she is a trouble maker.....yes,
I agree she has to be stopped - any suggestions?.....
Oooohhhh.....that's nicew-h-a-t
.....(LAUGHS).....you are full of
good ideas.....she what?.....(LAUGHS)
leave it to me.....When does she arrive?
.....I see. (IDEA) Why did you approach me?
.....she has a big mouth, I never did
anything like that.....well thankyou, it's
nice to talk to a gentleman for once.....
Don't worry about that, my lips are sealed...
....you will call.....hello.
.hello.....(CLICKS SWITCH HOOKS UP AND DOWN).hello..hello
(TIDIES UP HAIR, PICKS UP RECEIVER AND DIALS NUMBER
come on answer.....
(HUMS STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT).....ah! MARY, sorry to
disturb your beauty sleep at this UNGODLY hour but
what I have to tell you can't wait.....

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

Twenty minutes later BLANCH'S living room. She is on phone.
She has changed posture.

BLANCH: There are only a few selected people I have taken into
my confidence and you are one of them ROSE. I want
you to keep this quiet just the same way I kept your
affair quiet.....oh ROSE I've never told a soul
anyway, (HATRED) she'll wish she had never set foot
back in this town.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6

BLANCH'S living room, half hour later. She is on phone. BLANCH has changed posture.

BLANCH: I know what you mean DAPHNE but I'm going to take the gamble.....normally I would hang up but he sounded so sincere, yes a doctor, (ADJUSTS HAIR), I suppose we all take a gamble at times, remember the time you blew the kids lunch money on bingo (LAUGHS).....
.....oh DAPHNE!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

BLANCH'S living room 10am that morning. BLANCH sitting on edge of table looking at phone on wall.

BLANCH: I wish someone would ring me up, why do I always have to do the phoning. (KNOCK AT DOOR) Yes who is it?

MINNIE: It's me BLANCH.

BLANCH: Who is it please, I can't recognize the voice.

MINNIE: It's me, MINNIE, your friend MINNIE, I've come to get your washing.

BLANCH: Hang on MINNIE, I'll be right with you (BLANCH EXITS PS AND RETURNS WITH GARBAGE BAG FULL OF WASHING, GOES TO DOOR OPENS HALF WAY AND PASSES WASHING OUT TO MINNIE. MINNIE HAS HER CLUB FOOT IN DOOR TRYING TO GET IN BUT BLANCH KEEPS DOOR BARELY OPEN)
Minnie, I'm sorry I can't stop and talk but I'm having one of my migraines again.

MINNIE: (WISPERING) Don't you worry a thing BLANCH,
I'll get these done by the morrow, you get that light
out (MINNIE PUTS HER HAND AROUND CORNER AND TURNS OFF
LOUNGE LIGHT) and off to bed. Is there anything I
can get you love?

BLANCH: No you're a treasure as it is, thanks MINNIE. (CLOSES
DOOR, TURNS LIGHT BACK ON, SHAKES HEAD, RETURNS TO
TABLE AND SITS, DOOR KNOCKS AGAIN)
Yes who is it?

MINNIE: It's me BLANCH, MINNIE, your friend MINNIE, MINNIE
WENT.

BLANCH: (ROLLS EYES IN DISGUST, MOVES TO DOOR, PUTS OUT LIGHT,
OPENS DOOR HALFWAY, MINNIE'S CLUB FOOT APPEARS IN
DOOR, MINNIE POKING FLOWERS THROUGH GAP IN DOOR)
(SICKLY) Yes MIN.....what is it....what...what....

MINNIE: The flower man was just here and I thought it might be
best if I deliver them.....you know because of your
migrin head. I don't know who they are.....

BLANCH: Thankyou Minnie, I know who sent them...(CLOSES DOOR,
PUTS ON LIGHT, RUSHES TO TABLE AND PULLS ENVELOPE
APART WITH GREAT HASTE, READS CARD).....
(SHOCKED).....Who sent these, To dear BLANCH, from
a secret admirer.....(GOES ALL CLUCKY).....
OOOOOOooohhhh.....(ADJUSTS HAIR, FIDGITY)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 8

CARDABAR Railway Station, 2pm that day. MINNIE walks along platform pulling trolley.

MINNIE: CLARRIE, CLARRIE are you home?

CLARRIE: (OFF STAGE) Hey, Aunt MIN, a ray of sunshine (ENTER CLARRIE PS) has just brightened my day. (GIVES HER A KISS, BOTH SIT ON BENCH) you, haven't changed a bit since yesterday.

MINNIE: You're a wag, (CONCERNED) I'm not holding you up am I?

CLARRIE: You never hold me up, besides I'm stationmaster for a week.....(SUDDENLY) want a free ticket?

MINNIE: Stationmaster, I'm so proud, oh CLARRIE a free ticket, you'd get me shot, I'd be a nervous wreck if I ever used a free ticket.....I'd rather pay, thanks anyway stationmaster. I remember when your grandfather was stationmaster....it was different in those days of course, he used to let me help him with the signals, I knew every switch and lever in the place.

CLARRIE: (LAUGHS) Is that a hint?! I'll let you de-rail a few loco's through the week, where have you been anyway?

MINNIE: Just had to pop down to the shops and get a few things. I ran out of soap in the middle of washing the clothes, so here I am.....just called in for a chat.

CLARRIE: Aunt MIN, just out of interest, you're not still washing whatsherfaces clothes.

MINNIE: If you mean BLANCH EGAN, please have the decency to call her by name. To answer your question, yes, I still wash her clothes. I can't understand you at times, you never complained when I used to wash HELEN JASPER'S things, I'm not one for double standards where friends are concerned.

CLARRIE: Aunt MIN, slow down, please. It's just that I think she is using you, for a start HELEN JASPER used to let you use her washing machine in her house, you do all of BLANCH EGANS by hand, pay for the soap, your hot water and.....(LOUDLY)..and your time!

MINNIE: A few odds and ends thrown in with my things, I like washing, besides it keeps me out of mischief, just let me be CLARRIE, I'm big enough and ugly enough to look after myself.

CLARRIE: (BRIEF SILENCE, THEN LAUGHTER) You said it not me!

MINNIE: (LAUGHING, GIVES HIM A SLAP) Now tell me, what have you been doing with yourself?

CLARRIE: Nothing worth writing home about..Oh Yes! I was a good lad and helped the ladies at the Country Womens Association move their piano.

MINNIE: Oh bless your little cotton socks....but (SEARCHING)
.....CLARRIE I thought you didn't like BLANCH EGAN, she is the president of the CWA you know.

CLARRIE: A mere moment of compassion on my part dear Aunt MIN, how could I let six old dears lift that paino off the back of a ute, besides the dragon wasn't there, plus wait for it, plus I got a free lamington - with cream.

MINNIE: Well it was worth it then.

CLARRIE: It sure was, what do they do there anyway? I always thought of them as a mob of - bush lesbians.

MINNIE: (LOOKING AROUND NERVOUSLY) Don't ever say that again, walls have ears in this town.

CLARRIE: Why? - Are they?

MINNIE: No, but the subject is taboo in CARDABAR.

CLARRIE: (STANDS, WOMENS VOICE, PRETENDING TO BE BLANCH)
I tell you what MINNIE, tell me what you know about the lesbian bit, and I'll delete from my mind any memory of your affair with the baker.

MINNIE: (SHOCKED SLOWLY LOOKS AT CLARRIE, THEN LAUGHS).....
CLARRIE.....

CLARRIE: (DEEP AND DEVILISH) I must know!

MINNIE: I suppose now is a good at time as any to tell you,
well when BLANCH was a kid, a real loner, she
sort of adopted two old spinsters as her friends....
MARTHA GLEDHILL and FLO MORRIS...
gee this brings back memories.
Well the old biddies gave her everything
but she wanted more.....they saw she was becoming
spoilt and obstinate so they stopped the pampering.
Little BLANCH didn't like this and started a story.

CLARRIE: Just to be spiteful, I suppose.

MINNIE: Come on CLARRIE, anyway the talk of the town
was that FLO and MARTHA were having.....an..
unnatural relationship.

CLARRIE: The old bitch, things haven't changed.

MINNIE: Well, after that the old dears left town, they left
in shame, poor things. I wrote to them for a while but
they'd be long gone now. If you throw enough muck
it soon sticks.

CLARRIE: And the town stood back and let a little girls slander
wreck two old ladies lives.

MINNIE: Nobody wanted to create a fuss.

CLARRIE: What a mob of gutless wonders.....

ENTER BLANCH OP

BLANCH: Who are gutless wonders? I hope you're refering to
other railway people and not us normal citizens.

CLARRIE LOOKS AT BLANCH AS IF TO SAY SOMETHING
EXIT CLARRIE PS

BLANCH; There MIN, the youth of today - pathetic.

MINNIE: Oh he's alright, just a bit shy - he's stationmaster
you know.

BLANCH: (SITS DOWN) MINNIE, have you heard from HELEN JASPER
of late?

MINNIE: (NODS HEAD) Yes.

BLANCH: Well?

MINNIE: Oh, she's having a marvellous time

BLANCH: No..no..no, where did she contact you from, within Australia?

MINNIE: Yes

BLANCH: Where MINNIE, from where in Australia?

MINNIE: Where was it now...ah yes from the west.

BLANCH: (IMPATIENTLY) Western Australia or Western New South Wales.

MINNIE: (FLUTTERS) Ah PERTH.....yes Western Australia, I had to say Western Australia because there is a PERTH in Tasmania. Did you know that BLANCH?

BLANCH: (SIGHS IN DISBELIEF) MINNIE, I'm sorry I raised my voice, it's just that I heard she may be considering a coup-day-tart.

MINNIE: (MOVES HEAD SUDDENLY, ROLLS EYES, DOESN'T UNDERSTAND)
Yes.

BLANCH: Now, it would be ashame if she tried to overthrow me at
the CWA elections, I'm doing such a good job.

MINNIE: You are too BLANCH; I couldn't believe it when she
told me she was staying at the People's Palace.

BLANCH: Well I better let you be on your way MIN, could you
ask CLARRIE to pop over and see me dear.

MINNIE: (ADJUSTS HERSELF, RISES, CLUTCHES TROLLEY HANDLE)
Yes, I must have a million things to do.

BLANCH: Oh MIN, I'm a bit on edge today, I was going to pop
over later and borrow your vacuum cleaner but I'll
just give the cleaning a miss this week. This
migraines a killer.

MINNIE: BLANCH, I'll do it for you.

BLANCH: I couldn't let you do that MIN, it's such a big job.

MINNIE: Put it this way BLANCH, if I was sick would you clean my house?

BLANCH: Yes!....of course....you wouldn't even have to ask MIN. I won't be home till late, you know, CWA business that just can't wait. MIN, I'll give you my spare key, just let yourself in....MIN you're a modern day Florence Nightingale. Thanks pet. (GIVES MINNIE KEY)

MINNIE: Never fear, MIN is here. (BOTH LAUGH, BLANCH'S LAUGH IS FORCED) Bye for now love, I hope your migrains better soon.

EXIT MINNIE PS

BLANCH: Don't forget to call CLARRIE. (BLANCH RISES AND READS NOTICEBOARD).

ENTER CLARRIE PS

CLARRIE: Did you want to see me?

BLANCH: CLARRIE darling, congratulations on being appointed, stationmaster.

CLARRIE: What do you want?

BLANCH: CLARRIE, I'm surprised at you, a little bit of social intercourse on a railway platform doesn't necessarily constitute a favour.

CLARRIE: A favour!...I don't want anything, and I'm not about to do, you, a favour.....

BLANCH: All I want to know is, what train is HELEN JASPER coming on tomorrow?

CLARRIE: We don't have that information.

BLANCH: But you could find out, couldn't you.

CLARRIE: Passenger manifests are confidential.

BLANCH:CLARRIE, you have helped me in the past, re-member.

CLARRIE: (SHAKES HEAD SLOWLY).....you are such a bitch.

BLANCH: Thankyou CLARRIE, I knew you'd help.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 9

BLANCH'S living room, early evening. Sound of key, MINNIE enters.

MINNIE: BL...AA.AANCH.....Coo-ee, coo-ee, (WALKS AROUND HOUSE, LOOKING IN DOORS) coo-ee, BLANCH.
(RETURNS TO FRONT DOOR, EXITS AND RETURNS WITH VACUUM CLEANER TIED TO TOP OF TROLLEY, NOTICES FLOWERS, SMELLS THEM, SMILES, SITS DOWN AND LOOKS TO BE DREAMING)
Come on MIN, get to work, you lazy thing. (SMELLS FLOWERS) must have bought them herself, that's not very christian MISS WENT.....now get to work.
(WALKS OVER TO TABLE AND NOTICES BIN BESIDE TABLE WITH CAKE IN IT, BENDS DOWN, PICKS OUT CAKE.
MINNIE: (SHOCKED, PICKS OUT CHUNK BY CHUNK, SHAKING HEAD LETS OUT LOUD CRY)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 10

BLANCH'S living room, fifteen minutes later, MINNIE sitting at table looking into space, knock at door, MINNIE gets up and answers.

CLARRIE: Ah ha! Aunt MIN, (GIVES MIN A KISS, SHE RETURNS TO SEAT, LOOKING AHEAD, READY TO CRY) I knew I'd find you here, (LOOKS AROUND) what a dump!, the jabbers lair. Well I know you're probably wondering what has brought me here.....to, her, house. She is blackmailing me (PACES UP AND DOWN ROOM), yes blackmail....(CONFUSION AND ANGER), how was I to know.....god I was only 14, 14. We all do things we regret (MIN NODS HEAD).....she's been holding it against us for years.....tell you what Aunt MIN, that's it, that's the last time I'll be blackmailed.... I got confidential information - well I told her what train HELEN JASPER is coming in on tomorrow/but that is the last time/but that's what I said last time....
.....(MINNIE BURSTS INTO TEARS, LOUD SHRIEKS)
AUNT MIN.....what's wrong?
(MINNIE CRYING/STANDS UP/ SHE EMBRACES
CLARRIE, HE LOOKS STRAIGHT AHEAD, SHE IS DEVESTATED)

Hey come on AUNT MIN, it can't be that bad, come on,
tell me what's wrong.....you're my pride and joy....
hey.....(PUTS ON BABY VOICE SIMILAR TO DONALD DUCK)
come on MINNIE.....MINNIE.....come on my little
darling...come on....you don't need to be upset.....I
want you to be happy, we all want you to be happy...we
love you.....come on MINNIE. (COMMENTATORS VOICE)
And now ladies and gentlemen, MINNIE WENT, that sex
sireen from the sixty's will do one of her famous
strips. (MIN PULLS BACK FROM CLARRIE, TRYING TO
LAUGH OVER THE TEARS)

MINNIE: (PULLS OUT HANKY) You sure know how to change my
mood, plus I don't strip...well not anymore.

CLARRIE: Now what has upset you so much.

MINNIE: (WALKS OVER TO BIN, BENDS DOWN AND PICKS OUT CHUNKS OF
CAKE) I made.....her one of my.....fruitcakes....she
threw.....she threw it in the bin, I can't do much
for.....people, but at least I can make a good
cake.....she just threw it out...I can't believe it.

CLARRIE: I can, Aunt MIN, I have a little plan to teach BLANCH
a lesson, will you help?

MINNIE:Yes.....I could have
given that cake to somebody elseI suppose I
could make a trifle with it.

CLARRIE: Let's go.

MINNIE: I haven't finished the vacuuming.....(STERN)
yes!...If....have!...(PICKS UP CLEANER, PUTS ON TROLLEY
.....what do you want me to do?

CLARRIE: I see she got the flowers.

MINNIE: What!

CLARRIE: The plan is on course.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 11

The scene opens to the stage in darkness. BLANCH'S house, around
1am next day. Phone ringing.

BLANCH: (FOOTSTEPS, ANSWERS PHONE, PULLS ON LIGHT, LOUDLY)
Yes.....Oh it's you, doctor.....
that's o'kay I was up anyway. Thankyou for the
information, all checks out much to my liking,
HELEN JASPER, is coming in on the 4.45
tomorrow...shall we meet at the station.....good
say 4.30, wonderful.....I'll meet you on the
platform.....until tomorrow then, well.....goodnight
doctor...(HANGS PHONE)..yes goodnight doctor.....
(WALKS TO FLOWERS, SMELLS THEM, SMILES)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 12

CARDABAR Railway Station platform. MINNIE sitting on bench eating a pie. Two pies are also on top of her trolley, which is parked beside bench. Clock shows 4.30pm. Enter BLANCH.

BLANCH: (ALL DOLLED UP, LOOKS AROUND NERVOUSLY, CHECKS TIME AND TAKES OUT COMPACT, AS SHE DUSTS NOSE SHE NOTICES MIN IN MIRROR/SHOCK HORROR.
What are you doing here!!!!

MINNIE: (EATING PIE, SPEAKS WITH MOUTH FULL) I came down to meet HELEN.

BLANCH: Ohhhhhh MINNIE, you're disgusting, what rubbish are you eating.

MINNIE: Railway pies, CLARRIE lets me have them half price, of course there a day old, but there is no difference in the taste at all.....do you want one.

BLANCH: I don't want, you, on the platform.

MINNIE: (STARTS TO GET UP BUT SITS BACK DOWN) I'm staying, HELEN is my friend.

BLANCH: (NERVOUS) I'm sorry MIN, it's just that I am expecting someone and I wanted to be alone with him/speak to him alone/I mean I had things to discuss..... in private.

MINNIE: Where is he?

BLANCH: He was to be here at 4.30.....

MINNIE: Who is he?

BLANCH: None of your concern, a friend/yes a business friend.

MINNIE: What does he look like?

BLANCH: I don't know/ I mean I haven't seen him for years.

MINNIE : Where is he staying?

BLANCH: Mind your own business.

MINNIE: I was only being friendly, it's just that you have prettied yourself up so nice, it's nice to see you having

an interest in menfolk.

BLANCH: (HORRIFIED) Mind your own business. I am dressed up to meet HELEN.

MINNIE: I'm not sure if she's coming, she is my very good friend, but didn't tell me she was coming today.

BLANCH: Your very good friend...rubbish.....I'm the only friend you have in the world MINNIE, I'm about the only one who doesn't talk about your club foot in public - she does.

MINNIE: (MINNIE PULLS DRESS OVER LEG) I don't believe you.

BLANCH: Where were we, I have the band, the CWA, the boys and girls all lined up outside to meet her, what a day for HELEN, sickening isn't it.

MINNIE: And I always thought you didn't like her.

BLANCH: Like her - I hate her guts.

MINNIE: Then why this big reception, what are you doing it for?

BLANCH: Love MINNIE, love.

MINNIE: Love?

BLANCH: Yes, I love to see people upset (LAUGH) you know me
memory like an elephant, I never forget.

MINNIE: But how can this reception hurt her?

BLANCH: Easy, I know something nobody else does.

MINNIE: (SEARCHING) What is it?

BLANCH: No MIN, it must remain a secret.

MINNIE: O'kay.

BLANCH: It's just that I can't trust anyone, MIN.

MINNIE: O'kay.

BLANCH: You know how it is MINNIE, if I tell one person it is
sure to be passed on.

MINNIE: Yes I understand.

(PICKS UP SECOND PIE, TAKES SMALL BITE) Half price and
twice as nice.

BLANCH: (PAINFULLY) Oh! I'm sorry MIN, you're my best friend, I suppose I can trust you, you will be the first person to know this.....top secret.....information...Well! your friend HELEN JASPER has not been on holidays as she led you to believe.....she has been in a private hospital.

MINNIE: Hospital!

BLANCH: Yes, not for anything important, just a face lift, a boob job, etcetera....what a conceited bitch. Can you imagine it, at her age getting her head repaired - she needed it decades ago if you ask me.

MINNIE: I'm very confused BLANCH.

BLANCH: As you know I have always had a comfortable dislike for the woman....well I have contacts.....and she is returning today for a rest...she hopes to sneak into town so no one will know....her face is a mess (LAUGHS) she is black and blue....her eyes are bulging out, her nose is swelled - she looks like a modern day elephant man (LAUGHS)...and she hopes to sneak in, go home and get well.....well not when I'm around....I just can't wait to see her face.....er (LAUGHS AT HER WIT).....I should say I can't wait to see her face.....get it...her face.....The shock to her will be magnificent, I can see it now.....she'll arrive thinking nothing has happened...she'll walk through the station down the stairs and what a reception....Oh MIN what a plan....what a plan.

MINNIE: I think it is disgusting. The poor woman. She is my friend you know BLANCH.

BLANCH: Do you think that would worry me MINNIE? She got me once and I can assure you only once. I was a young gal, I was a laughing stock, no one does that to BLANCH EGAN and gets away with it. She'll get hers, I swore I'd get that bitch back.

ENTER CLARRIE:

CLARRIE: Hello Aunt MIN. (IGNORES BLANCH, GOES INTO TOILET)

BLANCH: He's got a sick mind that boy.

MINNIE: BLANCH! he's my flesh and blood, let him be.

BLANCH: I'll say as I please.

MALE
VOICE: BLANCH....BLANCH....(BAND MUSIC HEARD IN BACKGROUND)
(RUNS OPPOSITE DIRECTION TO VOICE)
EXIT BLANCH PS, BIG SMILE/MINNIE GOES TO TOILET DOOR,
KNOCKS, CLARRIE OPENS DOOR.

CLARRIE: Coast clear, here..(HANDS AUNT MIN LARGE FULL GARBAGE
BAG, MINNIE TAKES TO EDGE OF PLATFORM AND EMPTIES
BLANCH'S WASHING ON LINES BELOW/
CLARRIE SHAKES HEAD AND LAUGHS/EXIT CLARRIE
MINNIE RETURNS TO SEAT/BLANCH RETURNS,
SITS ON BENCH STUNNED, GAPING, CONFUSED)

MINNIE: (MINNIE TRYING TO COVER UP LAUGHING/ALL NERVIE.
I put your washing on the line BLANCH.

BLANCH: (AMAZED, FIDGETY) Good MINgood.....I thought it
might be him....someone did call me, I know that.
What are you so fidgety about?

TRAIN WHISTLE

MINNIE: (QUICKLY) Nothing.....er I'm excited.

NOISE OF TRAIN. GROWS LOUDER. BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS OF TRAIN.

BLACKOUT

Train whistle, screech of brakes, doors slamming, thirty seconds
at station. Whistle, take off, train noise to silent platform
BLANCH walking quickly up and down platform.....great confusion.

MALE

VOICE: (OFFSTAGE) BLANCH, parcel for BLANCH EGAN, BLANCH....

(MAN WEARING HAT AND COAT ENTERS PS

WITH TWO COFFINS ON TROLLEY, DROPS COFFINS, STANDS
BACK)

BLANCH: Wait who are you.....what is going on....doctor?..(MOVING
FRANTICLY, GOES OVER TO COFFINS AND READS NAMES,
SCREAMS.....WWWwhhhhhhaaaatttttt.....
Where's that fucken JASPER bitch.....
(GRABS MINNIE'S TROLLEY AND STARTS TO PUSH COFFINS
TOWARDS EDGE OF PLATFORM)

HELEN: Too heavy for you to handle BLANCH.

BLANCH: That fucken JASPER bitch did this.....(KEEPS
TRYING TO PUSH COFFINS OFF PLATFORM).....She'll fucken
get hers the mole.

HELEN, DRESSED AS MAN, TAKES OFF HAT TO REVEAL
HER IDENTITY.

HELEN: Want a hand BLANCH, you seem keen to have them back in the ground.

BLANCH STARES AT HELEN, LOOKS AT COFFINS, BACK TO HELEN, SPEECHLESS.

Not like you to be lost for words BLANCH, cat got your tongue? Hey I've got a surprise for you I'm running for mayor, I'm sick of being your doctor friend let's forget our differences and you can be my campaign manager.....I believe you've got a wonderful setup organised for me today. You're too kind BLANCH.

BLANCH: Leave me alone.....you slut....

HELEN: A slut!...that's a new one for you. Do you like the present I brought you...these poor old ladies, MARTHA and FLO, it took me months to find where they were buried.

Remember BLANCH.....remember how I had you dismissed from the girl guides for starting those horrible untruths about them....yes BLANCH these once proud beautiful women died in shame, but now they've come home to rest....I hope you'll come to the little service BLANCH.....this town will finally see you for what you are, your slandering days are over.

ENTER MINNIE, CLARRIE

MINNIE: (RUNS OVER AND GRABS TROLLEY)....Give!..me!..back!..my!.
trolley!

BLANCH: Why don't you all fuck off.....you bastards.....
you think you've got me.

MINNIE/CLARRIE/HELEN: Yes!

(BAND STARTS TO PLAY)

HELEN: (SARCASTICALLY) For me BLANCH, let's all walk together.

BLANCH: You can all go and get well and truely fucked, It's
not over yet, not by a longshot, mark my words.....
I'll get you lot, they'll believe me.....

CLARRIE: Come on BLANCH, be a sport, admit defeat, you've lost,
come and face the crowd.

BLANCH: Pigs fucken arse, now piss off you bastards, I'll
fucken get you lot you dirty fucken pricks.

(CLIMBS DOWN ONTO LINES)

MINNIE: (SHOUTS) You'll never get a cake off me again
(LAUGHS AND SHAKES HEAD AS SHE EXITS PS QUICKLY)

BLANCH: I'll get you scumbags...you all think you're pretty fucken
good.....I'll fucken get you lot...(WALKS ALONG
RAILWAY LINES, PICKS UP TORN WASHING AND THROWS ON
PLATFORM) MINNIE you fucken club footed bitch.....you
bastards.....fucken bush lesbians.....
(HELEN AND CLARRIE LAUGH AS BLANCH THROWS TORN CLOTHES
ONTO PLATFORM)

HELEN: Let's face the welcoming committee, you've done well
CLARRIE:.....where's MIN? (SHOUTS) MINNIE, MINNIE!

ENTER MINNIE

MINNIE: Here I am, thank goodness one of us is on the ball,
I've re-routed the Southern Aurora from line one so
she won't get run over.....

CLARRIE: The Southern Aurora doesn't come on line one.....

CLARRIE, HELEN, MINNIE SUDDENLY STARE AT AUDIENCE IN
FRIGHT AS LOUD CONTINUOUS TRAIN WHISTLE

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN